CITIES AND SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS

A PLAYBOOK FOR CATALYTIC COLLABORATIONS

CATALYST 2030
Collaborating to achieve the SDGs

ASHOKA

Mayors and social entrepreneurs, *the time is now!* As we face unprecedented crises like climate change and refugees on the move, it is time to combine our vision and resources to deliver lasting change.

Introduction

Social entrepreneurs and city governments have a lot in common, and by joining forces they can tap into an abundance of resources: talent, funding, regulatory and policy tools, human resources, experiences, and empowered citizens. Together, local governments, social entrepreneurs and the people they serve (and empower!) can have an immediate and sustained impact. With social entrepreneurs numbering around fifty million, they are a truly abundant resource, seeking to improve the quality of life of many underserved communities.

Cities, for their part, will spend an estimated $5.6 trillion in 2021 alone on contracting goods and services for their communities. As we are consumed by our efforts to achieve the SDGs at national level, we should not overlook cities as the truly transformative labs and engines for impact The Covid-19 pandemic was a reminder of this opportunity: millions of social entrepreneurs worked side-by-side with municipal governments.

They complemented one another, and empowered residents to co-create more effective policies, programs, and services. It is almost tragic, then, to see the vast majority of collaboration attempts between cities and social entrepreneurs fail. Often failure comes about from a lack of understanding of what success could look like, and a willingness to unlearn. Collaboration can be hard and slow, but it is worth the wait, as this report will show. The opportunity is not just a better use of funding, but truly transformative change.

Cities are increasingly the places where 'the rubber meets the road', as experts would say. What they mean is that local government leaders -- be they Mayors, Chief Executives or City Managers -- are increasingly doing more than just delivering local services. They have begun to solve problems that are bigger than their community and tackling issues that regional and national governments have proven incapable of solving on their own. Cities have been taking the lead in achieving many of the sustainable development goals (SDG) like climate change, air quality, migration, social mobility and -inclusion. They network nationally, regionally and globally to accomplish these goals. **Many would argue they are the most accountable level of government because they serve up the public services and regulations that have the most immediate impact on people's lives.** This dynamic plays out in over 550,000 local governments around the world that will spend more than $5.6 trillion in 2021 to serve billions of residents.

Less visible to experts is another force that is critical to achieving the SDGs: Social entrepreneurs. One way of explaining what a social entrepreneur is would be this definition used by the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor (GEM) in their global survey in 2015: ***A social entrepreneur is making it their profession to build an organization, business or movement with the explicit purpose of tackling a social problem.*** Many other, more nuanced definitions exist. But GEM provides us not just with a definition, but a number: according to their global survey, 1.2% of the world's adult population can be categorized as a social entrepreneur.

That's around 50 million people who make it their job, mission and often risk their livelihood to tackle a social problem. We can find such social entrepreneurs in any town or city, working creatively to cater for those who have fallen through the system, provide mutual aid, find answers to chronic systemic challenges, or in many other ways. City leaders around the world have hailed the heroic efforts of people stepping up to provide critical mutual aid and assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic. Many of those efforts were orchestrated by social entrepreneurs. Cities have historically also been the places where many shocks and stresses play out in their most visible form. In just the period since the global financial crisis in 2007/8, cities have dealt with significant challenges like mass unemployment, exposure of frontline workers, mass migration, social cohesion, housing and homelessness, public safety, affordability, public health crises, radicalization, and rapid urbanization.

Each of these challenges is urgent, but they move at different speeds. Many are interconnected, and all are complex. Behind each challenge, we find a community in need, people struggling to have their voice heard. And we have come to realize that cities can no longer sustain approaches that simply compensate for the effects of these problems. For generations, governments have treated homelessness, for example, as an unsolvable condition that requires homelessness services that cost billions of dollars in funding every year.

But in not solving the problem, we aren't just wasting scarce public funds, but also keep thousands of people trapped in often humiliating circumstances.

Herein lies the opportunity we want to present with this report.

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We believe that cities, communities and social entrepreneurs share the same urgent calling to make progress on solving the many pressing urban and social problems. By joining forces, we can tap into a shared abundance of resources: talent, funding, regulatory and policy tools, human resources, experiences, and empowered citizens. Together, local governments, social entrepreneurs and the communities they serve (and empower!) can have an immediate and sustained impact to improve the quality of life in cities.

But we need to begin this journey by acknowledging that we have work to do. Today, we estimate, based on conversations and interviews, that 99% of social entrepreneurs fail in their attempts to collaborate with municipal governments. It is important to acknowledge here that we don't think that this result is caused intentionally by anyone, but rather that many factors come into play that make collaboration difficult. If we had to try to summarize them, it would be: a flawed expectation about what success looks like.

In this report, we want to explain how we can go about this collaboration differently; by providing a playbook for collaborative action.

The cases provide a glimpse of what success can look like, and reveal the journeys and practices that can lead to success. Some common themes have emerged across the examples: the division of labor (and resources) among governments, social entrepreneurs and communities; the role of data and evidence in delivering measurable improvements; experimentation to find what works; seeing past quick-wins to win at the long game; and to empower people to take charge by focusing on their capabilities, rather than reducing them to problems.

As communities around the world try to achieve the SDGs, we are excited about the community of governments, social entrepreneurs, and communities striking collaboration gold because we see shared purpose and promising practices.

The good news is that the case studies we present in this report help us imagine a future in which we make the best use of our shared talents and resources to meet our common desire.

The stories also carry a more profound message: by working together, we can do more than simply service problems, and instead aim to solve them for good. This approach is called systems change, meaning a holistic approach in which multiple stakeholders and beneficiaries work together to do something in a fundamentally different way to achieve a truly transformative result.

Escaping the vicious cycle of being trapped in urgently servicing problems, rather than solving them, is one of the grand challenges for communities around the world.

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#2 Faced by a toxic and fearful public movement against immigrants in Nashville in 2006, social entrepreneur David Lubell supported community and public leaders to change course and become a truly welcoming city. Welcoming America and Welcoming International emerged from this experience, providing support today to more than 300 city governments and their community leaders in eight countries on their way to operationalize a shared vision to welcome all types of immigrants. Over the course of 15 years, David learned the value of a non-confrontational approach at even divisive moments, that relied on local leadership and community organizing to bring about measurable progress.

Overview of case studies

#3 Motivated by a deep compassion for the homeless, Rosanne Haggerty began a journey in 1990 that would lead her to raise the bar on supported living and redefine expectations about what can be achieved in homelessness. In 2018, her organization declared the first city to be at "Functional Zero Homelessness", with another 87 in the pipeline. Her approach is marked by a rigorous use of data to keep a group of city stakeholders on task. Informed by her work with communities battling homelessness, Rosanne also quietly began seeing an experimental new approach to bottom-up community development in Brownsville, New York City, in 2008 that put parents in charge of co-creating a more equitable early childhood experience with government and social care providers.

#4 Armida Fernandez started as a young pediatrician in a municipal hospital that treated Mumbai's poor. She kept following the trail of mortality of infants and young children (and later also domestic violence) that led her into the city's slum communities, where she developed interventions that improve health, nutrition and safety. SNEHA, the non-profit she later founded, is an enabling partner to municipal services. SNEHA supports and coordinates the delivery of government services, the empowerment of communities to gain agency, and the use of data and evidence to develop public health interventions that work.

Overview of case studies

#5 After training as an architect, Sascha Haselmayer stumbled over the question of why improvements that worked in one city, didn't spread to others. This question led him into the world of municipal public procurement that seemed designed to serve the bureaucracy more than the people. Citymart, the organization he co-founded, demonstrated in 135 global cities that procurement could be a transformative tool to meet urban needs better, giving rise to a new, self-replicating practice.

#6 Following decades of industrial decline as a port city on the outskirts of Liverpool, Sefton faced 50% in budget cuts at a time of rising complex needs following the 2007/8 financial crisis. Instead of resignation, city leaders and officials responded by reinventing the city government as an equal partner to residents and community organizations, working together to help the community thrive. And Sefton was not alone, other cities in the UK adopted similar models that provide a promising template to reorganize for collaborative change and provide a model for the participation of citizens and social entrepreneurs.

Case Studies

In Peru, the social entrepreneur Albina Ruiz created a movement that collaborated closely with municipalities, and the national government, to transform the lives of thousands of waste pickers. Over the course of 35 years, Albina's movement helped these marginalized and persecuted people go from stigmatized informal workers to recycling professionals protected by law, and contracted to deliver municipal waste services. Along their long journey to change, the movement had a series of transformative breakthroughs that happened whenever they transferred more power to recyclers to speak for themselves, negotiate laws, and oversee local implementation. The movement also avoided the kind of confrontation that might have led to quick wins, but would have undermined later partnerships that proved necessary to consolidate change.

Act I – Prototype

Reframing the problem of urban waste as an opportunity to lift a stigmatized community out of poverty.

Imagine yourself in the Amazonian rainforest for a moment. The deep green, vegetation; the rich smells and sounds. Albina Ruiz was sixteen when she left her home in Moyobamba, known as the city of orchids, in the Peruvian rainforest to travel a thousand kilometers to Lima, Peru's capital city. She left her home to study engineering. Her older siblings already lived in Lima, and were to be her guide to teach her everything about living in a city with over five million inhabitants. Like how to use a bus, or how to stay safe. They lived in Villa El Salvador, one of the poorest areas on the outskirts of the city.

At the time, Villa El Salvador was a shanty town, and it was notorious for waste. Huge mountains of trash were dumped all over the neighborhood. Albina had never seen anything like this before. There is no waste in the jungle. Waste, like the mountains in El

Agustino, was a big problem all over Peru. Waste was managed poorly, and as was the case in Lima, it was dumped in the poorest neighborhoods on the outskirts of the cities. Albina tells me that, at the time, municipal leaders were stigmatizing the poor. She herself worked in municipal government as the director of services early in her career. They thought that poor people wouldn't mind the dirt because they were dirty themselves. And since poor people mostly didn't pay taxes, they didn't deserve proper municipal services. Across the country, families lived among mountains of trash in neighborhoods like Villa El Salvador. People were feeding their animals off trash, finding scraps among the waste. So-called recyclers, waste pickers, were scouring the mountains to collect materials to sell. They were eyed with suspicion, harassed and persecuted by local police.

Albina completed her studies in

industrial engineering and environmental management and went on to earn a PhD in chemistry. Already in her first years of engineering studies, on project placement in El Agustino, her research revealed how broken the official waste collection system was. There was corruption everywhere, for example, when companies sold fancy trucks to municipalities for a lot of money. Employees were selling off gasoline instead of doing their collection routes. They would give officials illegal kickbacks, cash as a reward for buying expensive machines. She

began to see that, to improve things, municipalities needed good people in waste management. People who were motivated to improve the city. But instead, with the little money they had left after buying costly vehicles, they mostly hired unqualified people, mainly men who didn't care for their communities and carried out their work poorly.

And waste in Peru was not just an environmental problem. It was a mirror of society. Next to corruption, there was a lot of false prejudice. The prejudice against

Take-aways

"Reframe what, at first glance, may seem like an engineering or management problem, to include social conditions and human behaviors. This can put you on a trajectory not just to service, but solve a problem."

Act I – Prototype

Reframing the problem of urban waste as an opportunity to lift a stigmatized community out of poverty.

poor people was that they were dirty, but it turned out that it was the rich who were dumping their waste everywhere, even out of the windows of their cars. The difference, Albina recalls, was that in rich areas the streets would be cleaned. In the poor areas, no one came to clean up. Prejudice translates into the way you treat people, and letting poor people live among mountains of waste was just one of many insults they had to endure.

But in Albina's eyes, waste also had a value. There was value in collection, recycling, and materials. She began to help people in areas like El Agustino start micro-businesses to collect and treat waste. Many were started by women who went from picking through waste for scraps to building small businesses. They were creating thousands of jobs as well as making their communities cleaner and healthier. She first set up a local, then a national association of recyclers. Together, they approached municipalities to offer their waste management services. Instead of expensive vehicles, they used tricycles. They offered no kickbacks, but good waste management. Some recyclers went from earning three dollars a day to earning closer to fifteen dollars. Some families were able to save enough to send their children to university.

> ### Take-aways
>
> *"Demonstrate the benefits of a new solution to communities and municipal governments."*
>
> *"Organize your beneficiaries to develop a rich collective voice."*

Act II – The foundation for national change

Mobilizing the country to secure national policy and legislative change.

Albina Ruiz || Lima

This was a very exciting development, but Albina felt overwhelmed by the scale of the problem. How would they be able to solve this problem in Peru's 1,800 municipalities? Her life would be too short to go to every place and make this happen. Also, even as some recyclers were now better off, 87% of them still lived in extreme poverty. To pursue change, Albina founded a non-profit, Ciudad Saludable, and in 2000 called on the government to develop a national employment law that would protect recyclers. But after four years of lobbying, the government produced just an ineffective technical guide.

In 2007 they tried to get a law passed again. This time instead of just proposing a law behind closed doors they pivoted, organizing a national movement and worked with people seconded from a variety of ministries, meeting several times a week. Also, this time round, they found a powerful lever helping the recyclers to take a seat at the negotiating table. A journalist, for example, helped recyclers express their ideas clearly. They reached a political tipping point when they had a draft law on the table, but also the evidence of ordinances in seventy municipalities. They had proof that Peru's 190,000 families working in recycling, with more than 500,000 votes, could deliver significant cost savings and environmental benefits. To secure momentum at this critical point, recyclers from across the country organized a Happiness March on the capital. And this time round, they got the breakthrough. In 2009, twenty-three years after Albina began this work, Peru was the first country in the world to pass a law to protect recyclers under employment law protections.

> **Take-aways**
>
> *"Reframe 'Travel at the speed of trust', chose inclusiveness over burning bridges to get a win. This will pay off as <u>you</u> need to return to engage stakeholders in the future."*
>
> *"Bring together various authorities or stakeholders, like ministries and business organizations, to develop and implement holistic actions. Note the importance of empowering beneficiaries to advocate for themselves."*

Act II – The foundation for national change

Mobilizing the country to secure national policy and legislative change.

"La Ley del Reciclador" as it is called formally recognizes the work of recyclers as a job category. They could no longer be legally exploited, were guaranteed safe working conditions and fair rates. Peru's ministry of health began offering recyclers universal access to healthcare and vaccination. An official training scheme, offered free of charge, certifies recyclers and is tailored to the needs of people who suffer extreme poverty, work long hours and cannot read or write.

Take-aways

"Share the ability to solve. Let go of 'your' solution and pivot when opportunities arise to transition to national or systemic change via e.g. laws and regulations, or simply to allow others to solve the problems their way. This trust is often rewarded, as it gives other players the freedom to take initiative."

Act III – Securing transformative change

Building bridges and empowering beneficiaries to sustain the transformation.

The adoption of the law was a great success, but the movement soon realized that a law alone would not be enough. Petitioned by recyclers, the government adopted incentives for municipalities to adopt the law. By 2011, it passed a law that municipalities had to separate waste at the source and since 2017 municipalities can only access incentives if they contract with recyclers. Change happened faster as the recyclers themselves, now organized as a group, followed-up on the adoption of the laws in hundreds of municipalities, as well as with the Peruvian government.

As a group, they developed a powerful presence that brought industry leaders to the table to negotiate rates for recycling materials that were sold to other countries.

Following Peru, recyclers gained the same legal protections in Brazil and Ecuador. In 2019, Albina Ruiz became the Deputy Minister of the Environment of Peru to expand on her mission and deliver on her promise of a Clean Peru.

Take-aways

"Keep broadening your alliance-building to bring new stakeholders on board that will enable the next levels of change."

"Don't be satisfied with a policy change, like a new law, but empower beneficiaries to supervise implementation of new laws policies."

"Keep using all tools, like devising additional laws, to further institutionalize the change."

Faced by a toxic and fearful sentiment against immigrants in Nashville in 2006, social entrepreneur David Lubell supported community and public leaders to change course and become a truly welcoming city. Welcoming America and Welcoming International emerged from this experience, providing support today to more than 300 city governments and their community leaders in eight countries on their way to operationalize a shared vision to welcome all types of immigrants. Over the course of 15 years, David learned the value of a non-confrontational approach at even divisive moments, that relied on local leadership and community empowerment to bring about measurable progress.

Act I – The Nashville Prototype

As the community rallied around the vision of "Welcoming", it proved a practical recipe to overcome and deter anti-immigrant sentiment.

In 2006-7 it looked like Nashville, Tennessee, was at a crossroads. The Metro Council, the local government of Nashville City & County, had passed a bill to put English-language communication first and banned all official government communications in other languages. It looked like the city was turning against its immigrant community and their needs. Aligned with a broad coalition of business, faith and community leaders, Mayor Bill Purcell vetoed the adoption of the bill.

At the time, David Lubell was the executive director of the Immigrant Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC) which he had founded in 2002. He asked himself how to overcome the toxic atmosphere against immigrants in Nashville, the root cause that seemed to divide the community to the point where the 'English First Bill' got passed. In

his diagnostic, many residents in the city were fearful of newcomers, far from welcoming. What was needed was a culture change, brought about by changing the messages people would hear about immigrants. **To achieve this, he helped build a coalition of over five hundred people that was committed to non-adversarial tactics, instead seeking dialogue with US born Tennesseans.** They found community leaders who would speak up on behalf of immigrants, and bring immigrants and long-term residents together to build empathy and respect. The idea of building a Welcoming Nashville in a Welcoming Tennessee took hold.

By 2008, just two days after the inauguration of Barack Obama as the president, the referendum on "English Only" - no translation or interpretation would have been allowed for the municipal government, only services in English - was rejected by a large majority of

residents. In 2009, Nashville installed the Mayor's New Americans Advisory Board, followed in 2012 the MyCity Academy to help immigrants engage with, and participate in city government. In 2014, the Mayor's Office of New Americans was created. By then, the city website was optimized to operate in ninety languages and the city had active outreach to the immigrant community offering internships, jobs and mentoring in city hall.

David describes the journey Nashville took as the prototyping of the Welcoming Process, developed in an acute crisis of community relations. Not knowing what would work, the coalition relied on being upfront in not pretending to know the answers, but with a strong belief that a non-confrontational approach could heal divisions. What emerged was a process anchored through community leaders with good reputation in the community, but also ties into the city council.

Take-aways

"You don't have to have a solution to take on a problem. Offering your commitment and connecting with others who can move things in the community can be a start."

Act I – The Nashville Prototype

As the community rallied around the vision of "Welcoming", it proved a practical recipe to overcome and deter anti-immigrant sentiment.

Over the course of two years, the movement succeeded in creating an environment in which political leaders felt safe to openly embrace the idea of becoming a welcoming community. As the formula began to emerge, Welcoming America was spun out of the Tennessee Immigrant & Refugee Coalition to support other cities in becoming Welcoming.

Take-aways

"A commitment to non-adversarial tactics is a powerful principle in movement building that helps broaden your alliance over time."

"Be mindful of allowing for different speeds and journeys to your cause by different stakeholders. It may be wise to wait, for example, for political commitments until there is a safe environment."

Act II – The World

Taking the model national - and global, adhering to the principle of local leadership.

As the culture change in Nashville got traction, the Welcoming America network grew to 122 municipalities and 144 non-profits in the U.S. alone, collaborating on their journey to heal divisions, change mindsets and implement tangible policies to support the integration of immigrants. In 2017, the Welcoming International Initiative started to work with national partner organizations outside the U.S. to support non-profit and government partners to replicate and tailor the approach to their regional needs. As of 2021, forty cities in Germany, sixty-five in Australia, fifteen in New Zealand, 14 in the U.K. as well as cities in Spain, Mexico and Canada have signed up to the city network of Welcoming International partners.

David explains that cities initially came to join the network for a variety of reasons. In some cases, a local business or community leader with good ties to the municipal government will lead the initiative. Welcoming America actively looks out for such leaders, invests in them, and provides support to them. In other cases a city Mayor takes the lead, as was the case when Mayor Karim Reed of Atlanta decided to make Atlanta a welcoming city. Welcoming America will proactively look for both community leaders to build alliances as well as leaders in government, the intrapreneurs, who share their vision and values. This approach is of particular value when Mayor's transition, as happened in Atlanta, where the new Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms continued and strengthened the Welcoming program.

Ze Min Xiao is a case in point. She connected to Welcoming America in 2015 in her position as community innovation manager in Salt Lake County, Utah. An immigrant herself,

Take-aways

"Despite the nuances, maintain a strong compass for the values that underpin your work as well as the ways in which you can measure actual progress. After initial growth, new skills like learning to say 'no' may be critical to achieve real change."

she had already applied innovative approaches to help refugees, in particular women, become part of the community and economy of Salt Lake County for fifteen years. She saw how time-limited government interventions left many refugees stranded in a cycle of inter-generational poverty and frustration. She liked that Welcoming America didn't separate between immigrant types, but insisted on cities becoming welcoming to all. It resonated with her experience of the pitfalls of communication that elevates

particular groups like refugees, often at the expense of others. The Welcoming America network helped her build momentum to expand the work. She soon got the Mayor to sign on to strengthen their efforts to bring people together and shift the focus on talking about New Americans. A grant from Welcoming America helped her publish reports in particular on the economic contributions of New Americans, in part to shift the old narrative from "immigrants are more affordable labor" to the full diversity of skills

Act II – The World

Taking the model national - and global, adhering to the principle of local leadership.

and contributions. In 2016, she was appointed the first Director of the Mayor's Office of New Americans.

The first Welcoming America initiatives focused exclusively on culture change, but municipal governments like that of Dayton, Ohio, who in 2011 launched the Welcome Dayton initiative that focused on changing the policies of Dayton in order to make it the "most welcoming city in the midwest," inspired a change in the organization's theory of change. Instead of focusing on culture change alone, the network began to emphasize the importance of policy change also. As in Nashville, cities should implement tangible measures that made public services more accessible to immigrants, improving their experience. This meant that the work of becoming a Welcoming City could be housed in government, opening up new sources of funding beyond grants

from foundations and making the programs more sustainable in the longer term.

In this period of rapid growth, Welcoming learned how critical it was to have full alignment on values with new member cities and their local leaders. In some cases, cities didn't want to be welcoming to all (a principle of Welcoming America), but be open to particular groups like successful entrepreneurs or high-skilled people. As a result, the team had to learn to say no, or even end relationships where values didn't align to protect and maintain the shared vision of the network. The second learning in this period was to find effective, trusted and passionate local champions. David explains that credibility comes from a combination of sharing Welcoming's values, strong ties and influence in a key community like business leaders or faith groups, and good access to leaders in the municipal government. Welcoming

Take-aways

"Listen for the nuances in motivations people and organizations have to join your cause and work these to everyone's advantage, e.g. through communications."

"Understand your role in helping community changemakers like Ze Min Xiao succeed on their journey for change."

developed a more robust screening process to invest in the right leaders. David also points out how important it became to show a real 'win-win' proposition for everyone, people on all sides of the issue. In Nashville, business leaders from global companies in the city became an important lobby for improvements to remain attractive to their diverse workforce, an experience echoed by business leaders in Salt Lake City. A

Welcoming City leads to better staff retention, a higher willingness of sought after talent to consider offers in the location, as well as the reputational value to employees and customers of being associated with operating in communities that are open and friendly to all.

Act III – Standards

Using common operational standards and certification to sustain the global Welcoming vision.

Over time, a variety of new challenges emerged in the Welcoming network. The alignment of values remained important to deliver not just political optics of being labelled Welcoming, but to achieve the kind of positive impact that is felt by all immigrants. Some communities also struggled to mobilize the resources to implement their Welcoming journey. Welcoming responded through operational improvements to formalize its research process before investing in communities, such as screening for the ability of partners to raise funding and pull other resources together. Welcoming also developed clearer selection criteria, backed by more explicit membership agreements.

In parallel, Welcoming undertook a more transformative effort to develop a common standard for U.S. cities in 2017. The goal was that a standard would provide both quality control across the network, but also provide direction to the community. The process of developing the standard involved the whole network, members of the public and experts. The standard measures themes like government leadership, equitable access to public services and information, civic engagement activities, access to education, economic development and safety. Welcoming America provides certification across the U.S., by offering a simple application for municipalities followed by a self-reporting stage and in-person audit by Welcoming America staff at a cost of $12,000. Salt Lake County became the first county in the U.S. to be certified Welcoming in 2018, an important source of momentum for Ze Min Xiao's efforts to institutionalize improvements to the experience of New Americans in her community. For Salt Lake, certification brought prestige and pride in collaboration, as well as attracting new partners and funding for work to support New Americans. It also provided direction for further efforts, by highlighting areas for future improvements. In Dallas, certified in 2017, the process paid tangible benefits during the Covid-19 outbreak. To prepare for certification, the city had strengthened its community outreach to the city's 24% foreign-born population, under the auspices of an 85 member Welcoming task force. During the pandemic, these collaborations and information tools proved invaluable to work closely with immigrant communities. Internationally, Welcoming programs in different countries are developing their own standards to capture regional priorities.

As the network began to operate at scale, new challenges emerged that led to Welcoming America sharpening its definitions and operations with a view to maintaining quality and providing direction to the community.

This included a more structured selection process for partners, as

Take-aways

"Work with your movement to develop common standards and values. Note that whilst adhering to common principles like "Welcoming everyone", these can be quite different across countries or regions."

Act III – Standards

Using common operational standards and certification to sustain the global Welcoming vision.

well as a tightening of partnership terms. A major step was to develop a common standard and certification process that provides communities a detailed set of expectations to meet, as well as an independent validation. Instead of directing the community to live up to the vision of the Welcoming America organization, the standard was co-created by the entire Welcoming community, with the help of experts and contributions from a variety of activists. Taken together, Welcoming has adhered to a clear vision and set of values whilst resisting the desire to be overly controlling, tightening the operational and standards carefully in sync with the maturity and experience of the partner cities. And now this idea of a Welcoming Standard has spread to countries all over the world through the work of Welcoming International's member organizations, who have adapted the standard to be relevant to their national contexts.

Take-aways

"Such standards should not just capture the minimum, but provide direction to what good looks like. Allow for the time, and expert input, to do this well."

"Keep questioning how you can best balance your desire to control things with your trust in the different parts of your movement to do the right things. Trying to achieve impact by force can lead to rejection, but a lack of rules is also unlikely to yield any impact."

Motivated by a deep compassion for the homeless, Rosanne Haggerty began a journey in 1990 that would lead her to raise the bar on supported living and redefine expectations about what can be achieved in homelessness. In 2018, her organization declared the first city to be at "Functional Zero Homelessness", with another 87 in the pipeline. Her approach is marked by a rigorous use of data to keep a group of city stakeholders on task. But more quietly, in 2008 she also seeded an experimental new approach to bottom-up community development in Brownsville, New York City, where parents are in charge of co-creating a more equitable early childhood experience with government and social care providers.

Act I – The Prince George

An ambitious project is exemplar of how Common Ground gave dignity, safety and support to people who have experienced poverty, homelessness, or HIV/AIDS, a home in a beautifully restored hotel, with a keen eye on data.

As you walk up to the Prince George Hotel, it is stunning. Absolutely stunning. Tucked away to the side of Times Square in Manhattan, the grand building is full of stories and mysteries. Walking in, you notice the kind of all-glass security gates used in fancy office buildings. But if you wait to observe, you will notice that this is no fancy office, hotel or apartment building. The Prince George Hotel offers supported living to formerly homeless or low-income individuals. Half of the tenants live with HIV/AIDS, a mental illness and/or a history of substance abuse.

Rosanne Haggerty was one of the driving forces behind the Prince George, buying it in 1995 with Common Ground, an organization she co-founded in 1990. The kind of loving restoration was no indulgence, design is one of Rosanne's many secret weapons.

She believes places shape people and vice-versa. As if to underline this point, her own office is austere, simple. According to her, the secret to housing this vulnerable community of homeless people is two-fold. First, was to not leave it at shelter, but bring in all the support in mental health, health and other support residents needed. The second is to manage the tiny percentage of people who, if not looked after, would ruin the whole for everyone.

It was a seven-year-long, $48 million journey from turning what in the 1980's had declined into a dysfunctional homeless shelter housing 1,700 people until she could open the doors to 416 low-income and formerly homeless adults as well as people living with HIV/AIDS in 2002. The overwhelming beauty and detail that surprises the visitor is part of a plan to give dignity to people commonly stigmatized. But to succeed, the Prince George needed to

be beyond beautiful. Partnerships with organizations like the Center for Urban Community Services help the building provide the whole package of activities critical to re-enter society: case management, training, crafts and art spaces, healthcare, job support and social care services that can help people build their lives. The idea is as

simple as it is effective. Give people a stable, safe and supportive home, and they can focus on important things like finding a job. Financial partnerships unlocked half the funding in the form of low-interest loans from the city and the state. Furthermore, community oriented programs like a Community

Take-aways

"Prototyping can happen at different speeds and scales. You should think carefully about what scale is appropriate to prototype your proposition. Don't be afraid to be proportionate - a very big problem, like supported housing in NYC, may require a big prototype to demonstrate the parts coming together."

Act I – The Prince George

An ambitious project is exemplar of how Common Ground gave dignity, safety and support to people who have experienced poverty, homelessness, or HIV/AIDS, a home in a beautifully restored hotel, with a keen eye on data.

Advisory Board have helped build closer ties in the neighborhood to prevent problems and stigmatization. By 2010, Common Ground had created nearly 3,000 affordable homes like the units in the Prince George.

Take-aways

"A physical space can be a powerful way for you to demonstrate what success can look like, and shift expectations on what is possible."

"Don't shy away from complexity even in a prototype if that is what is required to achieve success. If you require many partnerships, take your time to build them. Buying the Prince George helped Rosanne win stakeholders over through a tangible project."

Act II – Functional Zero

A rigorous focus on data leads over 90 U.S. cities to join a community of practice that commits to the goal of effectively eliminating homelessness.

In 2011, Rosanne founded Community Solutions to lead the 100,000 Homes campaign. Despite its success, none of the participating cities ended homelessness. Rosanne and her team identified four underlying problems to sustainable progress. First, no single actor was accountable for ending homelessness. Second, funders evaluate success on individual programs, not collective impact to reduce homelessness. Third, flawed data collected only annually, that was off by as much as 75%. Fourth, a broken housing system in which newly built stock didn't deliver outcomes. To address these problems, they launched an initiative in 2015, Built for Zero, to learn what it takes to not just house more people but drive overall homelessness to 'functional zero', a state where homelessness remains rare and brief for a population. By

2021, eighty-nine cities participated in Built for Zero. Of these, sixty-one achieved quality real-time data, forty-three achieved measurable reduction in homelessness, and fourteen communities achieved functional zero, which means ending veteran and/or chronic homelessness.

Rosanne once again found that the secret to success starts with real-time data. Her campaign helps communities document every person experiencing homelessness by name, on at least a monthly basis. They apply a universal triage method, similar to an emergency room, to these cases to get all stakeholders around the table to agree on actions. Testing these actions at small scale helps find interventions that work. Successful communities bring all key stakeholders from housing authorities, local government, the veterans' administration, social-, faith- and community organizations

Take-aways

"Keep reframing your problem on your journey to change. After building facilities, Rosanne discovered new opportunities, more focused opportunities to intervene. She also became agnostic as to what exactly a solution has to look like, letting each community discover what works."

together on a weekly basis to review and respond quickly to each new case. Their expectation is no longer to manage the 'homeless population', but to solve a variety of individual cases.

At first, data is collected on a monthly basis, then weekly, then every day to increase responsiveness. Proven savings in

health and criminal justice costs motivate city leaders to sustain the program. Community Solutions develops partnerships with cities through research and communications, getting their evidence and messages into the places where early adopters might learn about Built for Zero.

The key argument is the evidence.

Act II – Functional Zero

A rigorous focus on data leads over 90 U.S. cities to join a community of practice that commits to the goal of effectively eliminating homelessness.

As to who can take the lead, Rosanne found that setting new expectations in a community can come from a lot of places, not just the government. Business leaders, faith groups, the broader public sector workforce. It is critical to not see Built for Zero as a quick fix, but a change to the system that will keep the community on top of the issue. In 2020, Community Solutions was awarded a $100 Million Grant from the MacArthur Foundation to help 75 communities reach functional zero by 2026.

Take-aways

"Data and evidence can be important to focus the attention of complex groups of stakeholders. Community Solutions provides a sophisticated case of creating a holistic culture of data and evidence and builds communities of practice around it."

"Be mindful of the role of trust, even if data and evidence rule. Rosanne and her team built an exceptional reputation of quality, success, ethics, and empathy over decades that makes it easier for funders and partners to buy into their science-based practices."

Act III – An Experiment in Brownsville

What happens when a struggling New York City neighborhood is given the time and resources to shape its destiny? 13 years in, parents are the experts when it comes to reinventing the early childhood experience in Brownsville.

Brownsville is a neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York City. It was known to be among the toughest places to live and an urban planner's nightmare: Too much public housing, leaving room for little else. It also suffered from poorer quality public services than other parts of New York City. In 2008, Rosanne wondered how what worked in the Prince George Hotel could be applied to a community of 58,000 people who had been left behind for too long. At the time, Brownsville had the highest infant mortality rate in New York, the highest high school drop out rate, the highest murder rate and was among the poorest neighborhoods in the city. The New York City government seemed to have overlooked the neighborhood for decades and was slow to act. Common Ground got the ball rolling by incubating the Brownsville Partnership, in the hope that others would come onboard.

Rosanne's vision was for Brownsville to become a stable neighborhood, safe and supportive for people to build better lives. Like with the Prince George, it would have to include not just better housing, but better public services. But where to start in a neighborhood with so many problems, so much violence, so much neglect? Brownsville is different from the Prince George in important ways. Unlike a building with tenants, it is a neighborhood, with no contracts or gates. And working with 58,000 people going about their lives is a different ballgame from working with 416 people who live in supported housing. And unlike the Prince George, the hundreds of services the community receives, from schools to health, welfare to street cleaning, housing to policing come from different New York City agencies. Brownsville is alive. In her mind, the way to get involved with Brownsville is to involve its people, to put them in charge.

The Brownsville Partnership started out by hiring residents with deep connections in the community to become community organizers and had them trained by world-class experts. It was critical to hire locally, to develop the skills and the muscle for the Brownsville Partnership to be led and run by the people of Brownsville. **Community organizing is much more than a meeting. It is a process of listening, building trust, learning, ideation and holding partners accountable. Done well, the residents of Brownsville would become knowledgeable and empowered to shape their destiny and hold New York City agencies accountable.** A critical milestone for the community was to have a vision, and actual plan where they wanted to go. In 2017 they published just that, the Brownsville Plan, and submitted it to the city. In its 160-year history, Brownsville residents had never expressed their ideas for the future. In fact, the greatest harm to the neighborhood

Take-aways

"Create space for bold experiments like United for Brownsville that are both inspired by your practices (e.g. data and evidence) but also explore more open-ended issues like community organizing that may seem hard to implement at scale."

Act III – An Experiment in Brownsville

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was inflicted in the 1970's by planners in city hall, designing great schemes for Brownsville, instead of with Brownsville. This kind of community organizing was new to Rosanne's work. It took a long time, several years, but she saw it as a critical foundation to build on.

But in parallel, Common Ground began to measure what was going on. She knew that New York City delivered poorer public services in Brownsville, but they now needed the data around which they could demand improvements. This was hard and slow work as agencies dragged their feet to release information. But good data had led to success in the Prince George and Built for Zero, leading to specific conversations about people, their needs, what needed to be done to support them.

The Brownsville Plan was also about re-imagining Brownsville.

One of the priorities was to change the early childhood experience. The community wanted to provide a healthier, supportive and safe environment for children and families. Local people and services worked together with experts, becoming experts themselves. Together, they created United for Brownsville in 2018. Funded by Robin Hood, a non-profit that fights poverty, United for Brownsville is a partnership between Community Solutions and SCO, a large non-profit that provides family services. Together, they focus on early childhood development, on the social-emotional learning and language skills of 0-3 year old kids, to set them up for equity in education and life.

Kassa Belay and David Harrington are the co-directors of what is called the 'backbone' of United for Brownsville. They point out that United for Brownsville is unusual in that it is led by both parents and service

Take-aways

"If you believe that your residents are experts in their own lives, treat them like experts. Consider paying them for their time, handing them real decision-making powers, and trusting them to set the pace and direction of the work to change systems."

providers. 21 family members are organized in a Family Advisory Board. Their lived experiences make them experts, and United for Brownsville pays them for their expertise. 40+ providers of social, education and health services for infants and toddlers are organized into a Provider Action Team. The backbone team facilitates the collaborations among families and providers. This set-up is designed specifically to address the racial inequities that marked the provision and uptake of city services in Brownsville. One

example is Early Intervention, a city offering of free services to children 0-36 months old with developmental delays. Parents of Black and Hispanic Children in Brownsville were accessing these services at much lower rates (-30%) than other parts of the city. The Family Advisory Board, reaching back into communities, reported the barriers families experience in accessing Early Intervention services. Many were not technical, but to do with a lack of trust in the evaluation process. They developed and implemented the idea of

Act III – An Experiment in Brownsville

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instituting an independent Early Intervention Ambassador to help navigate the Early Intervention system. Aileen Gonzales, was recruited by the family representatives as a trusted facilitator on their behalf, but also liaising with city agencies and service providers.

Just like in the Prince George Hotel and the Functional Zero campaign, data is taking a central role in United for Brownsville. After years of cultivating trust and enabling the community to find its voice and experiment with interventions, Kassa and David are deeply impressed by the sophistication with which the community is working with Early Intervention referral data, the only data set the city's social services have made available to United for Brownsville to-date. In 2020 and 2021, referrals of Black and Hispanic children were practically on par with the rest of the city.

United for Brownsville started as a hypothesis and experiment to let a community take charge. Despite its marked differences to the Prince George and Built for Zero programs, it relies on detailed and personal data around which to test and improve interventions that work. But unlike the intentional goals set by the homelessness programs, it is the families of Brownsville that determine what their vision of success looks like. After an intentionally slow start, it now moves at the ever-increasing speed of trust and capability of its members.

Take-aways

"Know when going slow will get everyone to the right place, faster. Be mindful, and make sure everyone shares the simple truth: there is no shortcut to community organizing and empowerment. United for Brownsville shows what the process can look like, how long it may take, but also the impactful outcomes it can achieve."

Armida Fernandez started as a young pediatrician in a municipal hospital that treated Mumbai's poor, following the trail of mortality of infants and young children, and later also domestic violence, to improve health, nutrition, and safety among slum communities. SNEHA, the non-profit she later founded, is an enabling partner to municipal services that supports and coordinates better delivery of government services, empowerment of communities to gain agency and using data and evidence to develop public health interventions that work.

Act I – If that is the truth, then do something

Studying neonatal mortality rates as a young lecturer, Armida uncovered practical issues that caused an unacceptably high rate of death among newborn babies. She became India's first neonatologist and built a world-class unit in her municipal hospital.

In the late 1970's, Armida was a young pediatrician and lecturer at the Municipal Sion Hospital in Mumbai when she began to analyze the hospital's post-natal mortality rate. Shocked by her findings and ridiculed by the medical research conference she presented the results to, her supervisor told her "If that was the truth, and if it felt bad, do something". Sion Hospital, at the time was understaffed and under-resourced by about 75%, meaning that generally doctors and nurses were unable to keep up with demand. But she began to track down the causes of the high mortality rate among newborns. Incubators donated by UNICEF proved too hard to clean, so they were hotbeds for infections. She removed them and developed an effective work-around instead: heaters and the warmth emitted by desk lamps did the trick and made a first dent in numbers. And Armida became the first neonatologist in India. Her pursuit to lower mortality brought her to ban problematic milk powder and formula from the ward that caused diarrhoea and institute breast feeding, and later Asia's first breast milk bank inspired by work at Oxford University Hospital. To overcome shortages, she trained new mothers to become wet nurses providing milk for their own, and the ward's other children.

Mortality rates kept dropping, and the neonatal department grew under Armida's leadership, including an intensive care unit. By the late 80's, it was a world-class unit, saving thousands of lives. The team was proud about the results.

> ## Take-aways
>
> *"Recognizing unacceptable outcomes around you and asking 'why', are the foundations for the kind of improvements that will change outcomes and systems."*
>
> *"Harness the power of good diagnostics, of finding the root cause of problems that, with some creativity, can then be solved with relatively simple interventions."*
>
> *"Develop your own, resilient art of problem-solving. One of Armida's achievements was to develop a science-based problem-solving practice that was effective to change multiple systems, even in the high-stress context of an understaffed hospital."*

Act II – Follow the problem

The clinical success led Armida to the next problem. To help poor parents care for sick children and prevent violence against women and children she starts SNEHA, an NGO to complement the municipal government.

As the hospital department became ever more robust as a healthcare provider, Armida found a new disturbing truth. Children kept dying, either at home, by not returning to the hospital or coming back in bad shape. Parents, the majority living in slum areas, were unable to look after children with complications or complicated care requirements. This was a particularly challenging finding since it undermined the great improvements in the hospital that saved children's lives, only to then expose them to dangerous conditions on release. And it was outside her official remit to provide care in communities, where assistance was needed. She decided to follow the evidence and go where the families are.

She began to take hospital staff to the slums. Whilst they had experience treating slum residents, experiencing their lives provided

many new insights and built their resolve. In 1999, she and her team founded Society for Nutrition, Education and Health Action (SNEHA), an NGO. After seeing evidence of violence against children and women at her hospital, where a whole ward was dedicated to female burn victims, they expanded their mission to decrease death and violence of babies and mothers. At first, her team at the hospital, including students, provided much of the backbone of SNEHA, employing a single social worker. Their weekly visits to the slum did more than inspire research, it revealed the dignity and humanity of children and families living under severe circumstances. Children were often happy, families invited the team into their homes.

SNEHA began to provide support to health workers at health posts, strengthening their skills and showing appreciation for their work. They

Take-aways

"Keep following the problem. Armida's method of diagnosing and solving the causes for unacceptable health outcomes led her from the hospital ward into the homes of the poor, and even into the policing practices. It also led her to take on the problem of widespread violence and abuse."

offered training to professionals and communities. From the outset, all programs were based on research and included randomized control trials -- best practices in medical research -- to find interventions that work. Armida eventually moved from the hospital to SNEHA, creating programs around what needed to be done, like setting up the centre for violence against women and children. The

approach caught on, but Armida also realized soon that she didn't have the skills to run the organization in a way that would achieve the best results from people and fundraising. Vanessa D'Souza succeeded her as CEO, professionalizing and growing the organization to a team of almost 500 staff running programs that cover maternal and newborn health; child health and nutrition; empowerment,

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health and sexuality of adolescents; and prevention of violence against women and children. Armida's evidence-based approach has evolved into a continuum of care approach, that intervenes at critical points so that women and children have continuous access and are aware of health services they need to live healthy and safe lives. SNEHA serves tens of thousands of vulnerable families, women and children through direct services and trainings, and by supporting municipal staff like health post staff, outreach workers and training the police force on gender violence and paralegal volunteers among many other groups.

SNEHA has a clear part to scale its models and solutions. One example is the maternity referral system, which saves the lives of women and babies in high-risk pregnancies. The interventions were developed using SNEHA's principles of

evidence-based work, scaling through partnerships and sustainability. To date, 43,000 pregnant women with potential complications have been referred through the system, which relies on 1,300 health post staff and outreach workers that have been trained by SNEHA. The model, developed in Mumbai, has been documented and replicated through partnerships in seven other municipalities since 2013.

Armida explains that the success of SNEHA has been possible because of a highly productive partnership with the Municipality of Mumbai. She had the great advantage of coming from within the system, one of the city's leading hospitals, and knew the system's strengths and weaknesses. But just as importantly, she says that the system knew and trusted her. SNEHA was started with partnership baked into its DNA. There was no way in which SNEHA on its own could serve a slum population of more than

five million people. Instead, they **became a trusted supporter to the government, with its mandates and significant resources. One guiding principle for her work has been to never tell anyone in government what to do, but instead let officials and workers lead, and offer help to them. Data and evidence help guide that relationship toward a common goal, leading to internal**

improvements as well as providing feedback to the government. Over time, this made SNEHA quite unique: where other NGOs stood out through complaints and critiques, SNEHA focused on improvements and celebrating the efforts of front-line workers. Armida says she also went to great lengths to not criticize the government in the media, and instead focus on what they are doing right.

Take-aways

"Trust is essential in collaborating with government. Consider Armida's advice on how to become a partner that is, over time, being seen as being ever more reliable, supportive, and trustworthy."

Act II – Follow the problem

The clinical success led Armida to the next problem. To help poor parents care for sick children and prevent violence against women and children she starts SNEHA, an NGO to complement the municipal government.

Financially, SNEHA operates programs that are funded by both government and philanthropy. Having a business relationship with government provides both access to significant funding and resources, but also is in line with the organization's strategy in which innovations developed through SNEHA are institutionalized in government, like the gender violence training SNEHA is providing to Mumbai's police force or by being appointed the implementing agency for Mumbai's first one stop shop centre for women and children survivors of domestic violence.

Take-aways

"How will you divide your roles and responsibility between the government and NGOs? A clear understanding will help you make the most of your resources. SNEHA, for example, developed human-centred and creative problem-solving capabilities that developed interventions that could be delivered at scale by the municipality, with all its human and financial resources."

After training as an architect, Sascha stumbled over the question of why improvements that worked in one city, didn't spread to others. This question led him into the world of municipal public procurement, a system that seemed designed to serve the bureaucracy more than the people. Citymart, the organization he co-founded, demonstrated in 135 global cities that new ways of buying goods and services could lead to much better public services in areas like health, infrastructure, technology, education, social care and economic opportunity.

Act I – Fail, fail, fail, Eureka!

Bringing about more innovation in city services collaboratively proved relatively straightforward. The problem of getting other cities to adopt solutions turned out to be much harder. In a last-ditch effort, after years of failed experiments, the team struck gold.

Municipalities spend about 8% of world GDP every year to buy the goods and services that shape our lives: public services in health, education, transportation, social care, economic opportunity and energy all rely on procurement. Procurement is important - and one reason why hundreds of public services delivered by our cities are ineffective. Take the examples of homelessness and waste management, presented in this report. Cities spend billions of dollars every year servicing homelessness, instead of ending it using Rosanne's proven solutions. And wasteful municipal procurement was one of the problems that caused the terrible waste problems in poor areas that Albina set out to solve. **Procurement is one of the root causes of why many social innovations struggle to scale.**

At the beginning, everyone advised

Sascha on the futility of working on engaging on the problem of procurement: "The government doesn't want to talk about it because it is embarrassing that they don't know how to spend the billions entrusted to them well. Business leaders are afraid to speak up for fear of losing trust of their clients. And the public only ever learn about scandals, not successes." But mentors and advisers also confirmed that if something could be changed, it would be impactful.

So, how does an architect even get to think about solving city procurement? As an architect Sascha was always frustrated by the disconnect between the result people wanted and the means by which they proposed to achieve this. From an architect, people always expect a building when, instead, they often needed a more comprehensive strategy to think about e.g. what future jobs might look like. Later, he found similarly that

Take-aways

"Use opportunities to learn around the motives and practices of other relevant stakeholders that are related to your mission. This empathy pays significant dividends in understanding the problem, and creating new solutions."

expectations in city procurement were also overly framed by the past, a situation in which cities keep investing in the same solutions, even if they weren't effective in the first place. In 2003, together with his partners, he helped develop a global network of urban living laboratories to facilitate collaboration among end-users like commuters, students, tourists, or immigrants; universities and research centers; corporations and startups. As these local teams created new solutions, Sascha observed how different the motivations of these different partners were, **but also how easily they could work together when they**

had a good problem statement to solve an actual need. As solutions came out of these labs, so did the question of how to bring them to other cities. Leaders in those other cities showed little interest in adopting these new ideas. Many simply ignored or rejected them. Or they said: "I love what you invented in Tallinn, can we invent that in my city also?". It seemed incredibly wasteful to reinvent the wheel in every town and city, frustrating inventors, and spending a lot more time and money than building on what works elsewhere. Stockholm, for example, spent several years and millions of Euros on a contract with IBM to

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develop a mobile payment system for parking. For just thirty-thousand Euros, they could have bought a better solution used by nearby Tallinn, Estonia. What applied to technology, applied to social innovations as well. And it seemed incredibly wasteful to reinvent the wheel in every town and city, frustrating inventors, and wasting valuable time, and money that could be put to better use.

Solving this problem of distribution and adoption soon became the real mission of the team, and they kept experimenting. In an early attempt, they designed matchmaking activities between open-minded city leaders and innovators for cities, to explore new proven solutions. Everyone loved the events, the catalogs, and reports. But even after five years of extensive effort, solutions weren't spreading. By late 2009, the team had just twelve thousand Euros left,

and one last idea. What if cities could publish their problems as a competition? Since this was similar to public procurement, wouldn't that mean that we could have a more orderly process to find the best way to solve a problem? They ran a quick and dirty pilot with nine global cities: Stockholm, Caceres, Barcelona, Oeiras, Taipei, Chicago, Sant Cugat, Eindhoven, La Selva. Each city posted a problem, and in total more than 317 submissions from innovators around the world were presented. Cities promised to pick one winner each, and support them to pilot their solution. Just six months later, pilots got underway in two out of the seven cities. Barcelona, for example, piloted water sensors to optimize green area irrigation. This approach was promising.

Take-aways

"Think about your work as being as much about finding the real problem as it is about creating a solution. You may not be able to put your finger on it right away, but experience something that seems off, or a poor outcome that repeats itself. Sascha kept following that trail and it led him to an unexpected place of intervention, public procurement."

Act II – Do more of what works

Scaling the simple idea of a 'problem-based procurement', the team built a global campaign model that played the economic development card to encourage new experiences.

Sascha and his team had found a promising approach not just concerning the procurement workflow, but also in why these cities said 'yes' to give it a try in the first place. Governments are notoriously sensitive about tinkering with procurement, for fear, and often a prejudice against what is possible. But nine cities took part. One lesson was that the cities wanted to be seen together as innovators. Not in procurement, but economic development. This insight was as important as the new approach because it answered the 'why now' question for cities. It also helped that Sascha, in one of his previous companies, had helped cities develop new strategies for economic development. That gave him some credibility, as well as a common language with open-minded economic development officials. Cities, overall, were becoming interested in not just attracting big companies,

but entrepreneurs who would create new jobs.

The team went on to combine these insights into an annual campaign, 'LLGA: Cities Pilot the Future', that would introduce cities to this new idea of problem-based procurement. It turned another concern that cities had into a feature: Mayors were afraid of publishing problems because it could be seen as failure. The campaign presented cities as a global cohort of pioneers, opening their challenges to the world's most exciting to innovators and entrepreneurs. Sascha's team also introduced a couple of new features. One was to charge cities a small fee to participate (about $10,000), which would trigger a more serious due-diligence process and make it more likely that cities would follow through to implementing the pilots. The other was to have a host city, to build up some peer pressure. Sascha and the team planned the whole

process as a series of experiments, to continually improve outcomes, in particular to increase the rate of pilot implementations, inspire learning about new solutions, develop problem-solving capacity in cities, and encourage more social entrepreneurs to work with cities.

Stockholm became the host of the second edition in 2010, with eight

Take-aways

"Look out for signals of what motivates people, teams, or cities to try out a new approach. Sascha found that economic development and a desire to network offered a powerful initial pull that motivated cities to try something new in procurement."

participating cities, including Lagos and Cape Town from Africa. Six pilots were completed. In the third edition hosted by Rio de Janeiro (2011) seventeen cities took part, including four from Latin America; in the fourth edition hosted by San Francisco (2012) twenty-two cities participated. By then, 80% of projects were implemented. **More and more cities were getting first-hand experiences**

Act II – Do more of what works

Scaling the simple idea of a 'problem-based procurement', the team built a global campaign model that played the economic development card to encourage new experiences.

in opening up their problems, sharing knowledge and solutions. They reported back not only finding great solutions to their problems, but a jolt of inspiration of just how creative they could be. A pattern began to emerge: cities found an average of thirty new solutions to their problems, and found that the partners were much more reliable and committed to good outcomes than their traditional suppliers. San Francisco, for example, used the process to procure the upgrade of 18,000 streetlights to energy-saving LEDs, involving citizens in assessing a variety of urban technologies. And the social and urban innovators loved the process because it was an open and transparent way to get seen, demonstrate and implement their solutions.

Importantly, Sascha and the team had also found a business model that stretched the original small budget to do all this by distributing cost and effort between the participation fees, recruiting sponsors and exhibitors, and the host city providing event logistics. As the model began to work, they also founded Citymart, a company that would underpin the model with an increasingly sophisticated approach to procurement and a strong ethical mission to combat corruption and manipulation of processes. Sponsors, for example, had no special access to the processes or decision-makers; jury members who evaluated solutions had clear methods to declare conflicts of interest, and an international member served on the panel for each city to spot deviations in scoring. After dozens of cities had successfully participated, Sascha and his team received a new signal from city leaders: Let's move past the campaign, and do this at home.

Take-aways

"Think about how you can sustain the period of experimentation and refinement that will lead to evidence that your approach works. It is likely to take years, not months, to see results. Sascha found that the campaign model offered a way to blend different types of funding in the first phase of adoption."

"Don't get stuck in the startup or prototyping phase. Keep listening for a signal that the community is ready to level-up."

Act III – Going deep, before going thin

The campaign model proved an effective and sustainable way to spread the idea of problem-based procurement. But with cities carrying out millions of procurements every year, the team wanted to transfer the process from an international event to the bureaucracies.

In 2013-14, three cities approached Citymart with the idea of implementing the process locally, outside the campaign. It was a signal that the team would need to develop a new model to work with cities individually. Barcelona became the first partner in this new model under the leadership of Mayor Xavier Trias. In 2013, the city announced the Barcelona Open Challenge, a groundbreaking procurement to solve six urgent problems in the city. Barcelona had gained the confidence to run this program through years of trust-building through the original campaign program. The trust, combined with more sophisticated skills that had developed over the years, allowed the Barcelona team and Citymart to co-create what amounted to a technically much more ambitious procurement program. The Barcelona Open Challenge broke new ground by making procurement much simpler, and easy to understand for anyone. Legal documents were concise, and used simple language. It was the first procurement to have a real public advertising campaign, inviting everyone to participate. Where a normal procurement is seen by just twenty people, Barcelona engaged 35,000 citizens in the campaign, and 20,000 more outside the city. One hundred twenty teams presented proposals, many of them upstarts led by citizens. It succeeded as a procurement, too. The six winning solutions ended up using just 70% of the budget. One of them, Vincles, even went on to win the Bloomberg Mayors Challenge, a five million Euro prize, for tackling the social isolation of thousands of elderly people in the city. As of 2021, the solutions are still operating in the city and growing.

New York City and Moscow were the other early adopters. By 2020, Citymart had successfully implemented the problem-based procurement process in 135 cities in 35 countries, on all continents. Around 3,000 public servants had learned this new approach through training and by doing. Next to organic growth and word-of-mouth, this success was the result of a deliberate operational strategy to (1) invest in strategic partnerships with global networks of cities like 100 Resilient Cities, an initiative by the Rockefeller Foundation, and (2) to cultivate a significant pipeline of almost three thousand cities around the world, and (3) design the partnership offerings in a way that cities have to stay committed to community outcomes and transparency.

Take-aways

"Operationalize your scaling strategy in ways that combine your growing reputation (and evidence) with partnerships and proactive outreach to develop relationships with potential future partners. You can accelerate trust-building through strategic partnerships, as Citymart did with 100 Resilient Cities."

Act III – Going deep, before going thin

The campaign model proved an effective and sustainable way to spread the idea of problem-based procurement. But with cities carrying out millions of procurements every year, the team wanted to transfer the process from an international event to the bureaucracies.

Today, professionals in cities around the world continue to use problem-based procurement and spin-off methodologies like problem-framing in their day-to-day projects. A growing ecosystem of hundreds of consultancies and non-profits have begun to support this replication, experimenting with creative new ideas around citizen engagement and co-creation.

One question the team kept asking itself was what role technology could play in making the approach more accessible to a greater number of cities. Concerned by the cost and effort required to support or implement problem-based procurement, Citymart in 2016 became a technology startup and raised venture capital from global impact investors to provide digitized workflows. Partner cities helped prioritize where technology could be most impactful, in particular to support their practical desire to get more participation from minority, veteran or women-owned businesses. Despite the proven impact of these tools, the team ultimately learned that the market moved too slowly to sustain them. Also, it turned out (to the surprise of both Citymart and city officials), cities truly valued the in-person interaction with the team.

In 2021, Citymart open-sourced all its tools and methods. Sascha now focuses on building broader public interest public procurement reform by supporting non-profits like the Open Contracting Partnership and government bodies like the World Bank to develop a more creative and participatory public procurement agenda for 2030 that will incentivize even wider adoption.

Take-aways

"Spot opportunities to let the work be carried out by others and empower them by sharing the knowledge and processes that helped you demonstrate what works. This may seem counterintuitive from an organizational growth perspective, but can unlock much greater and more sustainable impact."

"Be mindful about the hopes for technology. Sascha learned that it is not a substitute for close human relations, but also that there wasn't sufficient demand for the kind of scaling technology that investments in technology require."

After decades of industrial decline as a port city on the outskirts of Liverpool, Sefton faced 50% in budget cuts at a time of rising complex needs following the 2007-8 financial crisis. ==Instead of resignation, city leaders and officials responded by reinventing the city government as an equal partner to residents and community organizations, working together to help the community thrive.== And Sefton was not alone, other cities in the UK adopted similar models that provide a promising template to reorganize for collaborative change and provide a model for the participation of citizens and social entrepreneurs.

Act I – Remove a Meal to Improve a Meal

Faced with severe budget cuts, Sefton chose to partner with community organizations to reinvent, rather than eliminate, their community meals service.

In 2012, Peter Moore was given an unpleasant job to do. He was a social service commissioner in Sefton, a city of 275,000 next to Liverpool in the UK. The city could no longer afford to provide its community meals service, which brought hot meals to about 350 vulnerable, mainly elderly, people in the city. It cost the city about $300,000. The local council asked Peter Moore to cut that cost to zero.

Many families in Sefton were already facing really hard times. Sefton used to be a rich city with a big industrial port. As you walk through the city, you can see the docks, where most of the workers in the city would have earned their living for generations. It clearly had been a thriving community. Fathers and sons working side by side in the docks for decades. The port meant more than work, it is an inseparable part of the soul of the community.

But then, starting in the 1970s, slowly at first, the port lost its importance. Jobs were cut, unemployment rose. Families lost their income and young people had no job prospects. In 1981, in nearby Toxteth, thousands of desperate people protested and rioted against racism and poverty. Margaret Thatcher, the prime minister, wanted to free businesses from having to deal with workers they no longer needed. She wanted to put the economy firmly on the Fast Lane of globalization. Many families in Sefton were the problem left behind.

By 2012, when Peter was tasked with the job of saving money to deliver food to 350 of the most vulnerable homes, things were dire again. Not only had families lived through almost forty years of decline, but now the global financial crisis had hit them also. Once again, families in Sefton found themselves suffering from a major global event that they had nothing to do with. The docks were

Take-aways

"Cities always have alternatives even in the most dire circumstances, like austerity measures. Peter shows how municipal officials, if given time and support from their leadership, can find creative ways of achieving meaningful outcomes."

already gone, unemployment was high. In 2010, to respond to the financial crisis, prime minister David Cameron determined that the country would face austerity for years to come. Austerity means spending less. In the case of Sefton, it meant cutting about half the money the city could spend to provide its services. Community meals for the most vulnerable was just one of many services to be cut.

Peter's assignment came at a time when his government already could no longer keep up with helping

families in Sefton. Child poverty, poor health and unemployment were rising fast. Many families had to make very tough choices like choosing between buying food or heating their homes in winter. And here he was tasked with cutting the spending on hot meals for some of the hardest hit. Peter's hope was to not just take something away from people, but somehow find a way to not let them down.

Here is how community meals worked. People who needed meals had to pay $5 per meal to the city.

Act I – Remove a Meal to Improve a Meal

Faced with severe budget cuts, Sefton chose to partner with community organizations to reinvent, rather than eliminate, their community meals service.

The city had an agreement with a food company to provide those meals. In all, the city spent $300,000 per year on top of the $5 per meal people paid. So he began investigating what people really needed. He found out quickly that the food they were providing was actually quite terrible. Everyone got the same meal. But by talking to people he also found out that the delivery of the meal, for many, was the only human contact they had. So, they were afraid of losing this small interaction, even if it was just "Hi there, here's your dinner". He decided to start with a more basic question: What do people using this program really need?

Peter reached out to all kinds of organizations in Sefton to see if they could help. Volunteers helped and visited the users of community meals in their homes, to find out what their needs were, not just the food. They also connected them to other activities and services in Sefton that fit their needs. Peter and his team went out to talk to other local food businesses that deliver hot meals, for example to offices. Forty businesses signed up to provide meals at similar cost. Now people could choose from forty menus instead of getting the same old meal every day. To make sure things went well, the partners trained food providers to understand the special needs of vulnerable people they would now be serving. By the time Peter was done, he had saved Sefton the $300,000 he had to cut. But Sefton had also secured the food supply, made community meals better, and connected users to other community services for social contact.

Take-aways

"Have a methodology for problem-solving. Peter succeeded because he used the commissioning framework, a practice widely adopted by cities in the UK, that takes a holistic view of all resources in the community to organize better public service outcomes."

"Treat your residents and volunteers as equals and withstand the top-down temptation at times of crisis. Peter sought input from service users and volunteers from the outset, which was the secret to creating better outcomes with no budget."

Act II – Reinventing a City Hall

Faced with severe budget cuts, Sefton chose to partner with community organizations to reinvent, rather than eliminate, their community meals service.

Paul Cummins, a city councilor in Sefton, was Peter's boss at the time. Paul is the political leader responsible for social services. For more than ten years, in an effort to find three hundred million dollars in budget savings, Paul and his team applied the same tactics of involving residents at every step and empowering them to find creative solutions. This way of empowering people and looking for creative solutions gradually changed the way the whole city worked.

For example, when the city had to cut twenty percent from the 24 million dollar budget for supported living services, a program that provides cooking, cleaning, shopping and personal finance support to six hundred people with special needs, they brought both service providers and users into the process. They worked together to not only cut spending, but also to create a shared vision of how to save money while maintaining residents' independence where it mattered most to them. Sefton also groomed local nonprofits to bid against corporate service providers the city had used in the past, in order to have more affordable options based right in the community.

When asked what this intense period felt like to him, Paul responded: "My party, the Labour Party, took over Sefton City Council in 2012. Politically, we were opposed to the central government's austerity campaign, which had painted local governments like Sefton as lazy and wasteful. It was a political nightmare. And a moral nightmare because so many people were suffering. But we took that frustration and turned it into a mission to invest ourselves in making the best of a situation we knew we could not control." Peter chimes in. "It was really exhausting work, we were all pushed to our limits. Especially because we had to be creative whilst carrying so much responsibility for vulnerable people."

Despite cutting so many services, Paul's team got re-elected. Voters seemed to buy into the new model of being transparent about hard realities and involving people in implementing cuts. "None of this would have been possible without voluntary organizations in Sefton. We realized, much like Peter did with the community meals, that these organizations are very close to the people who need support and understand their needs best. In the beginning, we did budget cuts the old 'patriarchal' way. What I mean is that we, the public leaders, sat down and decided what to cut. That's how government used to work, it was part of the power we held. But quickly that changed to working with everyone to make sure that we would put the little money we had to good use. And it completely changed how the city does its business, how the whole government worked."

Sefton provides at least three valuable lessons, not just for city halls facing severe budget cuts. The

Take-aways

"City leaders have a critical role to play, especially during times of crisis, to build morale and extend trust to stakeholders in a way that creates a safer environment for creative solutions."

Act II – Reinventing a City Hall

Faced with severe budget cuts, Sefton chose to partner with community organizations to reinvent, rather than eliminate, their community meals service.

first is to accept changing realities quickly. Sefton's leaders showed humility early on, knowing that a top-down approach to running government would not be a viable response to growing and complex challenges. By choosing to involve the community in difficult decisions, local governments can share the burden of services while creating a powerful political narrative of local strength.

The second lesson is to protect exceptional public servants, like Moore, from becoming demoralized. Their entrepreneurship, creativity and moral compass is critical to maintaining service levels, and as Moore told me, it's exhausting work. Their efforts need to be recognized, both to boost them and inspire others.

Finally, instead of working with big outside companies that promise to be fast and cheap, cities should think more carefully about whom they contract with. If the key to getting through hard times or solving difficult challenges is listening and learning from people, then cities should have partners who do just that. Leaders should work with organizations and businesses who share their values and care for the community. Like social entrepreneurs.

Take-aways

"Create a clear vision government, social entrepreneurs and residents can work together to improve outcomes in a city. Paul discovered that being upfront and involving city staff, volunteers and citizens de-risked the tough austerity measures both functionally and politically."

"If the city government is serious about working with social entrepreneurs, it will need to go about contracting in new ways. Sefton shows how this transition can be managed, involving vulnerable residents along the way."

Act III – A New Model For All

Other cities and governments have arrived at the same lessons and created a wealth of new practices to partner with social entrepreneurs and communities to transform outcomes and become more resilient.

The city of Wigan, also with a population of 170,000, had to cut 25% of its budget in 2012 to cover the fallout of the financial crisis, and launched a comprehensive transformation of its entire government, working with the community to prepare for years of economic hardship.

In Wigan, the terrible reality of austerity became a community project called "The Wigan Deal." And it wasn't just a government program, but a fundamental realignment to make the roles of funders, service providers and service users more collaborative. The Deal nurtured community assets and promoted self-reliance in the community. Its underlying philosophy was to make the community a real partner with the government and take an assets-based approach to services, promoting self-reliance. City staff and partners took up a

collaborative approach to help each person unfold their potential as a capable citizen. By 2019, Wigan had successfully reduced its expenses, frozen council tax, kept services running, and improved the health and life expectancy of residents.

At the beginning of the program, Wigan, like many cities, shuttered most of its government-run community centers. But city leaders quickly realized that cost savings alone were not making the city more resilient, so they made other changes, too. As a result, Wigan re-invested a part of the savings into service contracts with 70 community organizations. These groups stepped up to provide a much larger variety of services than were previously available. In one case, Sam Broxton, a local resident, had the idea of taking over an underused building to operate a community hub. With support of the City, he set up a community interest company and

Take-aways

"Help cities, including all stakeholders, develop a case for change and for opening to social entrepreneurs. Wigan and Sefton didn't just deal with a live crisis, but used it as a moment to think deeper about their overall resilience."

received £120,000 (~$200,000) from the City's Wigan Deal Communities Investment Fund. Located next to a tearoom, the Hindley Library & Community Centre offers a wide range of activities such as crafts, drama, health, and job programs. The center is largely staffed by volunteers.

Wigan succeeded by building close, more flexible relationships with citizens and investing in partnerships with collaborative community organizations. Being so

close to the pulse of people's needs and capabilities optimized the use of scarce resources. Like Sefton, Wigan also developed new techniques to make these partnerships work. In particular, it wanted more flexible arrangements with contractors. Today, for example, social care providers meet weekly with social and other public service leaders like the police, at neighborhood level to exchange experiences and prioritize actions for the coming week. As a result, residents receive more responsive services, with budgets and

Act III – A New Model For All

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resources optimized based on needs instead of predetermined scopes. Further, the use of open-book accounting helped create transparency between the government and partners, who collaborate rather than compete for the allocation of budgets. Further, the use of open-book accounting helped create transparency between the government and partners, who collaborate rather than compete for the allocation of budgets.

Many of the lessons from Sefton and Wigan apply not just to budget cuts, but also facing other complex challenges. They created space for their staff to find room to look for alternatives and co-produce solutions with communities and social entrepreneurs. Importantly, they also provide practices as to how to truly see eye to eye with the partners they need to thrive. Power, funding, agency and respect have been thoughtfully re-allocated. Another small city in the UK, Southend on Sea, is training all its 1,800 local government employees to obtain the skills and techniques Peter Moore used to reinvent community meals in partnership with residents and community organizations.

Take-aways

"What deal should cities make to signal a transition from top-down government to seeing eye-to-eye with residents and social entrepreneurs? How can cities create room to not just appreciate, but fund this kind of transition?"

"City officials need new skills and a new framework to guide their actions. Sefton, Wigan and Southend showed that such change is possible even at times of financial hardship and immense uncertainty."

Conclusions

Conclusion

As this report has shown, when cities, social entrepreneurs and communities collaborate, they can significantly accelerate progress toward solving seemingly intractable social problems, and simultaneously making progress towards achieving the SDGs. The cases presented here provide a broad range of common practices that can be tailored to join forces, and tap into a shared abundance of resources: talent, funding, regulatory and policy tools, human resources, experiences, and empowered citizens. Together, local governments, social entrepreneurs and the communities they serve (and empower!) can have an immediate and sustained impact to improve the quality of life in cities.

Together, local governments, social entrepreneurs and citizens can have an immediate impact.

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Despite their geographic and thematic range, our case studies followed a shared path to collaborative change among social entrepreneurs, municipalities and communities.

For example, instead of setting out to change a system, the protagonists started out by solving a very specific problem. Albina set out to fix a municipal waste collection problem in the way an engineer would; Armida replaced problematic incubators; and David tried to overcome a wave of anti-immigrant sentiment in Nashville. But their paths soon digressed from the conventional quick-fixes, as they kept listening and looking for what we may call the real needs of people, the root causes, and problematic human and organizational behaviors. In many ways, we could read their stories as telling us that the framing and reframing of the problem is more important than any particular solution. Sefton, for example, kept going back to residents to see what they really needed, only to discover that Community Meals were as much about food as social contact.

This willingness to reframe a need is conditioned by a set of values around humility, inclusion, integrity, empowerment and evidence. In interviews, Albina kept referring to her deep respect for human relationships that was instilled in her childhood and let her turn her urgency and frustration at the dehumanizing treatment of waste-pickers into building bridges rather than accusations. Armida, as a pediatrician in a public teaching hospital, naturally applied scientific methods like randomized control trials to social interventions. They were open to unlearn past assumptions and flexible to explore new, collaborative solutions acceptable to everyone. All stories show a deep empathy and faith not just in people they were serving, but their respective partners in government or social entrepreneurship.

From here, the journeys follow similar stages of learning, experimentation, and eventual scaling - whether locally or to new communities.

But scaling, it is revealed in these stories, isn't simply a matter of a solution being adopted more widely. Instead, the scaling always involves an almost obsessive desire to reframe the problem involving the people they serve, and a continued use of data and evidence to find what works. What emerges is a shared (and audacious!) vision for transformative change, backed by a practice that combines listening, inclusion, evidence, experimentation and trust to change a broken system.

In our research, we found <mark>eight practices</mark> that underpin successful collaboration between municipalities, social entrepreneurs and communities.

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1/ Beneficiaries as Changemakers

Albina's work and United for Brownsville stand out as the most intentional cases of empowering beneficiaries to truly lead change. But important forms of empowerment take place in the work of Sefton and Welcoming also, where beneficiaries are at least part of the planning process or the actual solutions. Next to the degree of power that is extended to residents, what stands out as important is the degree to which these 'experts at their own lives' are empowered to learn the skills of planning, negotiation and reviewing evidence. Both recyclers in Peru and families in Brownsville receive training and organizational support to navigate complex systems.

2/ Shared Agency

All stories present examples of a clear and intentional division of labor on the one hand, and a shared exploration of what works on the other. Unlike traditional municipal contracts with suppliers, these collaborations look and feel more like partnerships among equals, seeing eye to eye. They are fueled by a common goal, most clearly presented in the Built for Zero and Welcoming Certification, but consistently practiced at high intervals in Sefton, Wigan, and with SNEHA in Mumbai. There is a consistency in having a shared vision like zero homelessness, followed by practices that bring all partners together to progressively work towards the shared goal. The division of labor can be a seemingly simple two-way collaboration like SNEHA and the government of Mumbai, or complex groups like the Welcoming councils involving dozens of stakeholders to define policies and act as ambassadors to change the culture in

communities. Even where the municipal government is not the initiator of change, as it was in Sefton, but brought on board later on as in the case of David Lubell's work, it is evident and logical that due to its democratic mandate and resources, governments wind up taking a central role in delivery. Welcoming, SNEHA, Ciudad Saludable and Community Solutions take on tasks like knowledge development, research and development, community organizing, experimentation, evaluation, and training. Their flexibility and entrepreneurial skill sets, including independent fundraising, help provide agility to try new things or respond to crises, as well as effectively embodying the long-term mission even at times when other partners drop the ball.

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3/ Build Bridges

There is a notable absence of passing around blame in these stories. Armida is most explicit in saying that she never publicly, or privately, fell for the temptation to blame the government. Albina clearly shows a never-ending appetite to bring new partners to the fold, starting with the municipal and central government and later extending this to business leaders. Sefton and Wigan not only ask the voluntary sector for help, but implement policies that instruct every employee to see eye to eye with residents and organizations. A common thread is the desire to lay the ground and build trust for what is to come. As a result, the partners withstand the temptation to pass blame around or use negative pressure to force a quick win. All this is in stark contrast to how many other actors play out their roles. Power asymmetries mean that many municipalities treat partners, especially if contracted, as mission-less suppliers. Many enterprises and non-profits

will, in turn, reduce government to be a sales target for services instead of a creative long-term partner.

4/ Always a Lab

Collaboration seems to thrive in an environment where no party is hung up on a particular solution or way for solving a problem. It is evident that a form of agile practice has emerged, organized around evidence or progress toward the shared mission. Wigan is a great example of a government developing goals in close consultation with citizens and those who serve the community on a weekly basis. Similarly, the sophisticated data practices of Built for Zero emphasize quality, including naming and triaging each case of homelessness, as well as interval to increase the rate of response. In some cases, data is collected by the government and shared among collaborators, in others it is the group putting their data together to get the most complete picture. Data is put to good use in all our examples to see if interventions achieve the desired results. A Lab approach, in this

In our research, we found <mark>eight practices</mark> that underpin successful collaboration between municipalities, social entrepreneurs and communities.

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4/ Always a Lab (continued)

context, means constant experimentation to find what works. In some cases, like SNEHA in Mumbai, the experiments are led by the social entrepreneur in the community, in others, like Built for Zero, they are led by multiple local stakeholders. Research is another common feature, like the year-long process of Welcoming America developing a shared standard in which experts and stakeholders worked together to define what Welcoming looks like. United for Brownsville is an example also of how new ideas can be incubated as bold experiments. It is notable how interventions move at different speeds: progress in Built for Zero communities is measured weekly, while United for Brownsville starts up at a slower pace, appropriate for building trust.

5/ Use all tools

"Always a Lab", especially in collaboration, is a new reading of what scaling a solution looks like. Many social entrepreneurs, for example, traditionally expect to follow a path where they invent a solution and then seek to partner with government to scale it. Here, the Lab is a form of collaboration that is agnostic to given solutions and instead a collaborative practice that puts the outcome first. It is striking that in almost all examples, the traditional idea of a solution is replaced by a practice of constant experimentation. But the stories also reveal other tools, like the creation of national laws to underpin municipal adoption in the case of Albina in Peru, the development of standards or weekly

check-ins. Especially when we look at how the stories develop over time, there are clear moments of discontinuity, where the collaboration steps up to a new level of impact by adopting new tools. This happened in the case of Rosanne going from running supported living buildings to the 100,000 Homes campaign, to Built for Zero.

Using multiple tools is baked into the 'commissioning' approach to public service improvement used today in many UK cities, including Sefton and Wigan. What this approach enables governments to do is to include all community services, partners and assets in their planning to improve outcomes. Taken together, the collaborative practices make many more tools available, and the stories reveal a sophisticated sense of timing their use.

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6/ The Long View

Social change is a slow process, always at the risk of either being too incremental to be transformative, or being too bold to be achievable. The stories reveal a valuable narrative about how visions for the endgame emerge out of day-to-day practice, helping the collaboration align around a shared mission. Hence, it is important for all partners to accept the true rate of change as a basis for the partnership. In practice, that can also include an open conversation about how each partner can sustain their role - which applies in particular to social entrepreneurs who are often unable to simply fund the long game. This openness is also reflected in the measures to build trust, evident in all stories. Armida and Albina both had worked in local government before starting their non-profits, which they credited with having the initial trust required to partner. Albina built trust

with recyclers over years of helping them step out of informality into operating sustainable businesses. In the case of Rosanne, trust was developed through decades of reputation and evidence-building, and by designing a methodology that becomes more demanding over time and where control stays firmly local. It is easy for social entrepreneurs to overlook the role of trust, especially when they feel that they have proved their solution. One important aspect of embracing the Long View is to engage in day-to-day practices that build trust, and plan resources together as trust is growing as a shared investment.

7/ Expectations

We highlighted that false expectations are the #1 reason why so many social entrepreneurs fail to partner with municipal governments. It is therefore no coincidence that the stories of success presented in this report all lack a grand promise of success early on. Instead, like Welcoming America, they simply showed up with humility and a willingness to do and learn. This is a stark contrast of how social entrepreneurs and governments often perceive their encounters: as a pitch, a kind of promise. There are two challenges with the pitch encounter. The first is that it creates a binary environment, similar to an investor pitch, in which a yes/no decision is implied. In reality, much to the frustration of pitchers, few governments work to make such binary decisions. The other is that such a pitch is generally unrealistic. Imagine Rosanne pitching 'my solution will end homelessness in your city'. These stories tackle complex

In our research, we found <mark>eight practices</mark> that underpin successful collaboration between municipalities, social entrepreneurs and communities.

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7/ Expectations (continued)

problems that rely on a broad range of new practices to be adopted across a community. Instead, the better promise implied here seems to be that all parties understand that they are at the beginning of a shared journey, a journey that may take a decade or more at best. Here, the expectation changes to the confidence that despite the urgency, everyone will do what can be done. It is important for all sides to be upfront about the asymmetry of resourcing and make the sustainability of the partnership a shared concern.

8/ Values

Sefton and Wigan talk openly about looking for partners that are not just capable, but share their values. The stories reveal shared values not just around the mission, but the way collaboration is practiced in all the above practices. Listening, trust building, shared problem-solving, respect for data and evidence, a sense of the long-haul. It seems that in particular a shared focus on outcomes, on the beneficiaries and their needs is the most basic principle of these stories. This focus is institutionalized in all the stories: rigorous reporting of homeless cases, adherence to the indiscriminate Welcoming Standard, implementation of the "Ley del Reciclador", provision of meals and social contacts, reporting and resolution of social and healthcare cases in the community. These are creative approaches to turning an intangible value into a shared truth, the basis of partnership.

Based on these practices and our research, we have a set of <mark>recommendations for city leaders and government professionals.</mark>

What Have You Learned?

What can you learn from this report, and the stories it presents? How could the practices presented here inspire change in your city politics and operations?

Create A Point of Contact

Offer a central contact point to provide technical assistance internally to put the guidelines into practice. This contact point should also be trusted and approachable by social entrepreneurs.

Find Out What's Going On

Collect experiences from within city halls of people working with social entrepreneurs to identify your pioneering practitioners and collect their experiences.

Create a 'Yes' Culture

Can your leadership create an environment that defaults to "Yes, here is how we can collaborate"?

Develop Model Pathways

Help guide your relations with social entepreneurs:

What different endgames you can plan for? E.g. improve services, improve outcomes, or tackle a chronic problem.

What stages can be expected and what support can you provide at each step of the way?

Imagine Your City at its Best

Here's a cheat: You can start with the stories presented in this report to imagine how your city could have been at its best at each step of the way.

Share the Learnings

Learn more about social entrepreneurs and share the learning across the city leadership. Be mindful of the distinction between social business (e.g. a shoe company that donates part of its proceeds to a good cause) and social entrepreneurs (like the cases presented here, organizations that set out to solve a social problem)

Convene Social Entrepreneurs

Convene local social entrepreneurs to co-create a statement on how the city intends to engage with them. This should explain your definition of social entrepreneurship, your rationale to build relationships, and tangible instructions and practices that can be used by any city official in their relationships. Make these guidelines public.

Based on these practices and our research, we have a set of recommendations for social entrepreneurs.

What Have You Learned?

What are your take-aways from this report? How can you use the practices presented here to advance your mission?

Develop Your Offer

Develop an opening message for your relationship with city officials. How can you educate them about what it means that you are a social entrepreneur and not a supplier, and invite them into building a relationship? Can you explain your value without making oversimplified promises about your solution?

Re-Frame Your Perceptions

Revisit your perceptions of government. Are you at risk of reducing city governments to being simply a buyer or funder of your solutions? How can you develop a definition that truly gives credit to the creative resources, experiences and journeys of change for government?

Remember: It Takes Time!

Try to bear in mind that it will take years to build the kind of trust that is extended to people like Armida, Albina or Rosanne. Regardless of how proven your organization is, the personal trust and rapport you develop are going to require time.

One work-around is what Welcoming America does by building relationships with other leaders in the community who have the trust of the government.

Be Open About Money

If there is an interest in a partnership, develop a practice to speak openly about your financial sustainability or other needs in the context of your collaboration. It is critical that you can be upfront in a situation of highly unequal power and resources.

Invite Your Beneficiaries Along

If you serve or empower beneficiaries, for example people with disabilities, make them part of your conversations with government officials. It is one of the most effective ways to keep the conversation focused on constructive outcomes and improvements.

Lobby Together

Network with other social entrepreneurs in your community and consider forming a local chapter to a national network (if there is one, like SEND in Germany), or else create your own group to provide mutual support and develop a common voice with governments.

We have every reason to be optimistic!

If cities and social entrepreneurs can deepen their collaboration, communities will thrive. But this will require everyone to embrace a new narrative of collaboration that accepts three important truths:

1/ My solution is not the only way.

I will need to open up to the ideas and experiences of others, trusting that they care as much as I do.

2/ I am not superior.

Whether I represent a big government or a small creative social initiative, we can only succeed if we truly accept one another as equals.

3/ Change will be slow.

We have to be accepting of the long journey ahead and how to sustain our efforts and relationships to achieve our goal together.

The power in these stories lies in the answers they provide about both how to succeed in collaborating for the long-game, but also on what to do right here and now to make things better.

About the Authors

Lead Author

Sascha Haselmayer is a partner at Ashoka Germany. As a social entrepreneur, he has led urban innovation, economic development, and government innovation projects in over 40 countries. He trained as an architect at the Architectural Association in London and is a globally recognized expert on urban and local government innovation.

In 2011, Sascha co-founded Citymart, an organization that transformed expectations and practices of public procurement by introducing civic engagement, diversity, problem-solving, and innovation into a core bureaucratic process. Prior to Citymart, Sascha founded businesses and organizations that pioneered inclusive urban innovation districts and civic service innovation in cities.

Sascha's contributions to urban and civic innovation have been recognized through an Ashoka Fellowship. He has been a Public Interest Technology Fellow at New America. Sascha is the author of The Slow Lane, and has authored two books on service and procurement innovation in cities. He has served as an adviser to organizations like the Rockefeller Foundation, Bloomberg Philanthropies, and the Aspen Institute.

Editors & Conceptualization Partners

Manmeet Mehta is the Director of Program Operations and Impact for Ashoka U.S. She has more than 16 years of expertise in the corporate and social sector on initiatives and programs improving access to capital, designed and executed innovation and systems change strategies, led grantmaking compliance, sourced innovations, and provided advice on strategic philanthropy and grantmaking.

She launched the first global crowdfunding program in the US called The GlobalGiving Accelerator, creating a way for small to large nonprofits in more than 110 countries to access a $270 billion US individual and corporate philanthropic markets. Over the years, she has advised funders like USAID, The Rockefeller Foundation, and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation on developing systems change strategies, co-authored "Embracing Complexity: Towards a Shared Understanding of Funding Systems Change" alongside partners from McKinsey, Skoll Foundation, Catalyst2030, and an overview on a new playbook for effectively funding systems change innovations."

David Lubell is an accomplished social entrepreneur and a leader in the movement for more inclusive cities worldwide. In 2009, David founded, and became the Executive Director, of the NGO Welcoming America, which has been recognized worldwide for its innovative approach to local-level immigrant and refugee welcoming.

David later founded the Welcoming International Initiative, which supports aligned welcoming efforts worldwide. He is also the founder, and former Executive Director of the Tennessee Immigrant and Refugee Rights Coalition (TIRRC), which he founded in 2002. David received a Master's degree from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, where he was a Reynolds Social Entrepreneurship Fellow.. He is a recipient of several additional social entrepreneurship fellowships, including those from Ashoka and Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation. He is also a World Economic Forum Young Global Leader, and in 2017, was awarded the Charles Bronfman Prize for Jewish humanitarians.

About the Organizations

Catalyst 2030

Catalyst 2030 is a global movement of social entrepreneurs and social innovators from all sectors who share the common goal of creating innovative, people-centric approaches to attain the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Joining forces with communities, governments, businesses and others, Catalyst 2030 members are changing systems at all levels through collective action and bold, new strategies.

catalyst2030.net

Ashoka - Innovators for the Public

Ashoka identifies and supports the world's leading social entrepreneurs, learns from the patterns in their innovations, and mobilizes a global community that embraces these new frameworks to build an "everyone a changemaker world."

Ashoka builds and cultivates a community in the shared understanding that the world now requires everyone to be a changemaker – a person who sees themselves as capable of creating large-scale change.

ashoka.org